manners, customs, and character of an interesting race of people, who are rapidly passing away from the face of the Earth; lending a hand to a dying nation, who have no historians or biographers of their own, to pourtray with fidelity their native looks and history; thus snatching from approaching oblivion what could be saved for the benefit of posterity, and perpetuating it as a just monument to the memory of a truly lofty and noble race.

I started on my arduous and perilous undertaking with the determination of reaching, ultimately, if my life should be spared, every tribe of Indians in North America, and of bringing home faithful portraits of their principal personages, both men and women, from each tribe; views of their villages, games, sports, &c.; and full notes on their character and history. I designed also to procure their costumes, and a complete collection of their manufactures of all kinds, including their implements of war and the chase; and to perpetuate them in a GALLERY UNIQUE, for the use and instruction of future ages.

I have spent more than eight years already in the pursuit above named, having been the most part of that time immersed in the Indian countries, mingling with Red Men, and identifying myself with them as much as possible, in their games and amusements, in order the better to familiarize myself with their superstitions and mysteries, which are the keys to Indian life and character. And I claim whatever merit there may have been in the originality of such a design, as I was the first artist who ever set out upon such a work, designing to carry, as I did, canvass and brushes and "paint-pots" to the Rocky Mountains.

I have as yet by no means visited all the tribes; but have advanced a very great way in the enterprise, and with far more complete success than I expected. I have visited forty-eight different tribes, the greater part of which I found speaking different languages, and consisting of more than half a million of souls: and have brought home safe and in good order 320 portraits in oil, all painted from life, in their native dresses and in their own wigwams; also 200 other paintings in oil, embracing views of their Villages, their Wigwams, their Games and Religious Ceremonies, their Dances, their Ball-plays, their Buffalo Hunting, and other Amusements, (containing in all, above 3000 full-length figures;) with the Landscapes of the country they live in, as well as a very extensive and curious collection of their Costumes, and all their other Manufactures, from the dimensions of a wigwam down to the size of a quill or a rattle. It was during the eight years that I thus spent in the wilderness of America, over its beautiful prairies and through its rugged and Rocky Mountains, that I made this numerous collection of paintings; and it is from amongst them that I have selected the number to be embraced in this work.

Having thus been a constant participator, for these several years, in the scenes introduced into the following pages, I feel confident of my ability to give them with truth and with proper effect. And while I am thus offering a work on a subject almost entirely new to the enlightened world, I feel assured that most persons will unite with me in opinion, that no part of the human family furnish more picturesque subjects for the painter's brush than the North American Indians; nor any part of the brute creation, more furious and spirited examples than those which the Indians, in these sports, are contending with.

The main object of the views contained in this volume will be to convey to the reader as full and complete an account as possible, of the Hunting Scenes of the American Indians, which, whilst they form a material part of their numerous sports and amusements, furnish them with their whole means of subsistence. The reader will find also, in looking them over, nearly every article of their implements of war and the chase, as well as almost every variety of Landscape of the country, in the different seasons of the year, fully described in the letter-press.

The author confidently hopes that the appearance of this work may so far gain the approbation and support of the public as to encourage him to meet the very heavy expenses of putting forth the future Numbers, containing portraits of the most distinguished Indians of America, with biographical Notes on their Lives, all their various costumes, views of their dances, games, religious rites, &c., all of which it has long been the ambition of the subscriber to publish in such a form.

GEO. CATLIN.

LONDON, 1844.